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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [KE](#)
SUBJECT: KENYA ELECTIONS: THE BATTLE FOR LANGATA - HOW A
LOCAL SKIRMISH COULD LOSE THE WAR FOR ODINGA

Classified By: Political Counselor Larry Andre for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Kenya's Constitution requires that its President also be an elected Member of Parliament. Of the three major presidential candidates, only Raila Odinga lacks a safe seat. Odinga's choice to run for parliament in the ethnically mixed, Nairobi-based Langata constituency he has represented since 1992, rather than a safe seat in the Luo-dominated Nyanza province, has exposed him to a tough campaign. His challenger is Stanley Livondo, the very rich) very corrupt) ethnic-Luhya PNU standard bearer who can now count on near unanimous support among the pro-Kibaki residents of the constituency (principally Kikuyus, older Nubians and some fellow Luhyas) after allegedly buying off two other pro-Kibaki candidates. We have heard continuing worries expressed by the most senior levels of the Electoral Commission and other rumors indicating that efforts could be made to influence the Langata election against Odinga. Odinga's recent campaigning there is an acknowledgement that high turnout particularly in the Luo-dominated Kibera slum is the key to overcoming Livondo's threat. Our discussions with ODM and PNU local organizers and interested citizens leads us to believe that the race is competitive but that in a free and fair election, Odinga would likely retain his parliamentary seat due to strong support among Luos and Nubians in Kibera. Odinga supporters may try to physically prevent PNU voters from accessing Kibera polling stations until late on election day, if even then. This is a recipe for electoral violence, obviously. Odinga forfeiting a clear national win over Kibaki due to a dubious loss in Langata has the greatest potential to produce significant post-election disturbances in Kenya. Accordingly, four U.S. Mission observation teams, including one led by the Ambassador, will be deployed to Langata on December 27. END SUMMARY

LANGATA CONSTITUENCY: ODINGA'S LONG-TERM BASE, BUT NO SAFE SEAT

12. (SBU) Raila Odinga has represented Langata in parliament for the past 15 years, winning convincingly in three elections. Langata district encompasses Kibera slum (one of Africa's largest) which is predominantly Luo with a sizeable Nubian population, several housing estates, and includes the

toney suburb of Karen. Odinga's choice to run for parliament in the ethnically mixed constituency of Langata, rather than a safe seat in the Luo-dominated Nyanza province, has exposed him to a tough campaign. Odinga's most significant challenger is Stanley Livondo, the PNU standard bearer who can now count on near unanimous support among the Kikuyu community and a significant proportion of his fellow Luhyas after two pro-Kibaki candidates (Mungiki criminal organization founder Ndura Waruinge and Karanja Mungai of FORD-Kenya) withdrew from the race on December 19th and endorsed Livondo. It is unanimous among local political observers that Livondo bought off these candidates and their vote block. There is no doubt that the PNU is focused on winning Langata.

13. (SBU) Poloffs visited Langata to get a feeling for the dynamic of the campaign. We spoke to ODM ward organizers, civic candidates and a PNU organizer in Kibera slums, as well as groups of citizens in Kibera and the housing estates outside Kibera, where Kikuyu dominate.

KIBERA: NO-GO ZONE FOR PNU

14. (SBU) Kibera has a large Luo population, along with sizeable numbers of Luhya and Nubians. From what we saw, Kibera operates as a closed ODM political shop. ODM campaign posters were everywhere, although we saw evidence of many defaced PNU posters. ODM organizers in Kibera were confident of an Odinga victory, predicting 80 percent of the vote. However, when asked about plans for getting out the vote, one civic candidate expressed his desire to make it difficult for non-ODM voters to exercise their right to vote, stating, "We will get our people to the polls at 4am and then the others may vote after 2pm, when we finish." ODM contacts admitted they were concerned by allegations of vote buying and the possibility that Kikuyu would be brought in from outside Langata to vote for Livondo. ODM allegedly has mobilized its supporters to patrol Kibera and physically repel suspected pro-Kibaki outsiders, which is a recipe for electoral violence. Multiple sources tell us Langata will have a particularly heavy police presence on election day.

15. (SBU) Rajab Walala (ethnic Nubian), a PNU organizer in Kibera, confirmed that it was nearly impossible to conduct any campaign activity there. He complained that PNU posters were immediately torn down or defaced and that people were beaten if they wore any pro-Kibaki or PNU campaign shirts. Media recently reported the beating death of a 15-year-old boy in Kibera by a mob for wearing PNU gear. Oddly, Walala was wearing bright blue PNU gear when we met him on a Kibera street.

16. (SBU) The Muslim Nubian community in Kibera (estimated at 10%) seems to be largely pro-Odinga. Many Kibera landlords are Nubian. They originally hail from northern Sudan and Southern Egypt. They were settled in Nairobi by the British after fighting for the allies in World War I. Many of them have no land titles, their chief grievance. Poloffs spoke with community leaders, who stated that fear and promises of spoils were motivating factors in the community. Kibaki has lured landowning Nubians with promises of clear title to land, while others sense that momentum is on Odinga's side. Embassy contacts estimate that the Nubian vote breaks 75/25 for Odinga, who trends even higher among Nubian youth.

LANGATA IN PLAY OUTSIDE OF KIBERA

17. (SBU) In contrast to Kibera, where evidence of ODM support is all pervasive, the streets of the housing estates in Langata were strewn with campaign material of a large number of parties and candidates. We were unable to find any PNU party offices in the two districts we visited, although PNU campaign material was widespread and residents told us that small scale campaign events were common.

¶8. (SBU) At the time of our visit, the withdrawal of the two pro-Kibaki candidates had not yet occurred. However, one group of youth were convinced that Ndura Waruinge would ultimately sell his support to PNU candidate Stanley Livondo) who has established a reputation for being a money man, in trying to gain support. Waruinge withdrew the following day.

¶9. (SBU) We also met a group of ODM supporters at a mechanic,s shop outside Kibera. They expressed the widely held fear of ODM that PNU was trying to rig the elections. In the affluent suburb of Karen (the site of the writer Karen Blixen's colonial era farm), a local official stated that Karen residents don't really care about politics; however people we spoke to were roughly split between ODM and PNU supporters.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) The idea that pro-Kibaki forces will bring in voters from outside the constituency seems to have gained some currency both on the street and among the political elite. Odinga,s recent campaign appearances in Langata and his wife,s appearances in Kibera on the day of our visit seem a tacit recognition by Odinga that he must defend his seat and work to get out the vote. Livondo's toughest task may be to convince his fellow Luhya to vote for him, as the Luhyas of Western Province lean towards Odinga. Despite the recent boost to Livondo,s campaign, we believe that Odinga,s strength in Kibera should see him through in a free and fair election. Odinga forfeiting a clear win over Kibaki due to a dubious loss in Langata, however, has the greatest potential to produce significant post-election disturbances. Accordingly, four U.S. Mission observation teams, including one led by the Ambassador, will be deployed to Langata on Election Day, December 27.
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